Plant Fact Sheet
Longtom Paspalum
(*Paspalum lividum)*

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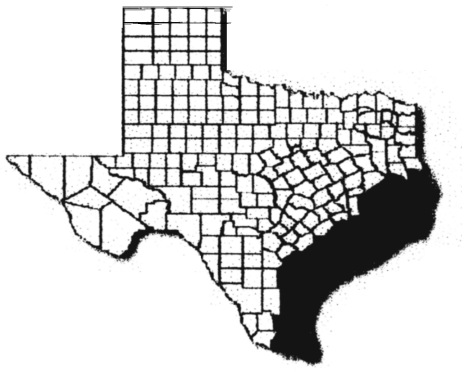
INTRODUCTION

Longtom paspalum (*Paspalum lividum*) is a native, warm-season, stoloniferous perennial (Gould,1975). It is a member of the Paniceae tribe of the grass family (Hitchcock, 1971). It grows from 2-3 feet in height. Longtom paspalum is an apomitic species (Burson & Bennett,1971). There is no known commercial variety of longtom paspalum.

ADAPTED AREA

Longtom paspalum is native along the Gulf of Mexico from Florida and Alabama to Texas, through Eastern Mexico, south to Argentina, and in the Carribean Islands (Gould, 1975). In Texas, longtom paspalum can be found in the southeast region, and in the coastal part of the Rio Grande Plains (Correl & Johnston, 1996). It grows in low-lying areas, wet savannahs, in swamps, along streambanks, and in ditches (Hitchcock, 1971). Longtom paspalum prefers moist to semi-wet conditions and tight clay loam soils (Correl & Johnson, 1996). It appears to be sensitve to frost.



USES

Longtom paspalum is valuable as a native range plant to grazing animals. Hatch, Schuster, and Drawe (1999) note that longtom paspalum is one of the top four species in cattle diets on mid-successional rangelands along the central Texas Gulf Coast. It can also be used for erosion control (Burson & Bennett, 1971). Additionally, the seeds of longtom paspalum can provide food for birds (Hatch, Schuster, & Drawe, 1999).

ESTABLISHMENT

Longtom paspalum can be grown from seed, from cuttings, or from vegetative clumps. It appears to germinate best at temperatures between 20º-30º C. Germination tests done with longtom paspalum seed by the Texas Department of Agriculture Laboratory at Giddings, Texas yielded germination averages ranging from 15%-56% for different harvest years. Seed production and seed fertility of longtom paspalum appears to be highly dependent on the amount of moisture the plants receive during the growing

season. In drier years, seed production and seed fertility decrease sharply in non-irrigated plants. Even under good irrigation, seed yields have been low at the Plant Materials Center.

Plant Materials Center staff have had the best success growing longtom paspalum from cuttings, with approximately 90% survival. Its stolons make this grass well adapted to this method of reproduction. Larger vegetative clumps of longtom paspalum can also be moved to new sites. Once established, the plants will spread themselves via many runners. Adequate irrigation must be provided for cuttings or clumps to be transplanted successfully.

MANAGEMENT

For seed production purposes, longtom paspalum must be irrigated when rainfall totals are low or else seed production, fill, and fertility will be greatly reduced. This grass prefers "wet feet" and is not exceedingly drought tolerant. Under drought conditions, it does not compete well with bermuda grass. Weed control can be a problem. Regular fertilization of longtom paspalum is also necessary, as it appears to be sensitve to iron deficient soils. For Texas, this grass is best suited to southern coastal areas where mesic conditions dominate, and the chance of frost is low.

REFERENCES

Burson, B. L., and Bennet, H.W. (1971). Chromosome number, microsporogenesis, and mode of reproduction of seven *Paspalum* species. *Crop Science*, v. 2, pp. 292-294.

Correll, D. S., and Johnston, M.C., (1996). *Manual of the Vascular Plants of Texas.* Richardson, TX: The University of Texas at Dallas

Gould, F. W. (1975). *The Grasses of Texas*. College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press.

Hatch, S. L., Schuster, J. L., and Drawe, D. L. (1999). *Grasses of the Texas Gulf Prairies and Marshes.* College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press.

Hitchcock, A. S. (1971). *Manual of the Grasses of the United States, Volumes 1&2, 2nd Edition*. Revised by Agnes Chase. New York: Dover Publications.

WHERE TO GET HELP

Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) office for more information. Look in the phone book under "United States Government". The Natural Resources Conservation Service will be listed under the subheading "Department of Agriculture".